

# Ames Historical Society

AMES • IOWA

FOUNDED 1980 AS AMES HERITAGE ASSOCIATION

## Newsletter to Members 2008 SPRING.... ISSUE #1/4

The mission of the Ames Historical Society is to preserve local history and illuminate its stories.



E.M. Throckmorton at work in Scotty's Chicken Inn, 1956.

### Ames Historical Society Board:

|                |             |
|----------------|-------------|
| President      | Kathy Svec  |
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### Board Members:

Mary Atherly, Bob Bourne, Roger Coulson, Matthew Donovan, Joanne Goldman, Nick Howell, Carol Phillips, Neal Tarmen, Dennis Wendell, Sharon Wirth

The Board meets the 2nd Monday of each month at City Hall at 6:30pm. Members welcome!

Administrator Alan Spohnheimer  
Staff Sara Vouthilak, Dennis Wendell

Ames Historical Society is an incorporated, 501c3 not-for-profit organization dedicated to promoting interest in state and local history through publications, programs, exhibitions and operation of an archive and historic site.

Headqtrs: 416 Douglas, Ames, IA 50010  
Open Wed-Fri, 1-5pm  
Mail: PO Box 821, Ames, IA 50010  
Phone: 515-232-2148  
E-mail: ameshistorical@qwest.net  
Website: www.ameshistoricalsociety.org

The newsletter is published four times a year for AHS members. Direct comments & questions to: Editor, PO Box 821, Ames, IA 50010 or e-mail above.

Hoggatt School is located on the grounds of Meeker School, near 18th and Burnett, Ames, IA. Open April 1 through October 31.

## E.M., Ada and Adel Throckmorton and Scotty's Chicken Inn

by Dennis Wendell, Ames Historical Society Collections Curator



A favorite eatery in west Ames for twenty years was Scotty's Chicken Inn, owned and operated by the Throckmorton family between 1941 and 1960. This mom-pop-and-sons restaurant was known, obviously, for its fried chicken, but also for steak, roast beef, seafood

and homemade pies. Scotty's also served barbecued ribs and is believed to be the first restaurant in Ames to offer them. Another feature was the singing waiter. First located at 3332 Lincoln Way on the south side of the street, the enterprise moved to 3417 on the north side five years later. This site is now occupied by the May House.

The entrepreneur of the family was the father, E.M. (Elijah Marquette), known to friends as "Mac" or "Scotty." The son of a Methodist minister, Mac came from a farm near Neola, east of Council Bluffs. While serving in the military during World War I, he had learned cookery from an African-American cook. After the war, Mac and his wife, Ada, alternated between farming and food service. The couple once ran a bakery in Central City, Nebraska. It was a large-scale operation employing a workforce of 22 people, baking 500 pies a day, and operating eight delivery vans. At another time, the Throckmortons operated a 24-hour restaurant.

With this collective experience, the couple became interested in owning their own restaurant. Stopping in Redfield, Iowa one day while traveling, they learned of a restaurant opportunity in Ames. In April of 1941, the family, which by now included two sons, Richard (20) and Adel (11), moved to 3316 Lincoln Way.

The Throckmortons became the third party in one year to run the Ames venture named Scotty's. The first operator was a Scottish woman who had formerly been a waitress at the Sheldon-Munn Hotel. She lasted exactly four months, July to November, before selling out to the Deckers from Stanhope. The Throckmortons bought the business the following April. After a short time, finding that the business was doing well, Mac decided not to change the name on the building's sign, especially since it was still unpaid for. So the name "Scotty," from the first owner, stuck for the next two decades denoting the restaurant and the new owner.



Ames T

Pictured: Adel, Ada and E.M. Throckmorton, 1956

## The Singing Waiter

Young Adel immediately started helping with the family business by busing and waiting tables, but gradually worked long hours at a variety of jobs in the restaurant. Many times all 100 seats in the place would be filled, and Adel would yell orders back to his father in the kitchen, although eventually he had to write them down.

As he grew older, Adel developed a talent for clearing tables without using a tray. He could carry eight coffee cups and saucers or eight glasses of water at a time by holding his arms flat. Another trademark was to deliver food on trays held by his fingertips high above his head.

Besides being a born showman, Adel possessed a good singing voice. His reputation as a singing waiter was secured one day as he was singing along with tunes being played on the jukebox. To his delight, customers started tipping him. Former part-time waitress, Kay Riley, recalls that the Johnny Cash song, "I Walk the Line," was a commonly requested number. Adel accommodated song requests until he left Ames to join the Air Force. For some reason he never resumed his singing upon returning to the business. One of his more memorable tips was a quarter left by a prisoner on route with a sheriff to a California jail. Adel often related, with a grin that "tips paid for my tuition while attending Iowa State."

Adel also enjoyed elaborating on other sources of income for the family. Money taken in from the jukebox paid the building rent of \$35 a month, and profits from a pinball machine paid the electric bill. In an aside, Adel jokingly added that "the electric meter was located inside the building and had to be fed regularly with quarters to keep the electricity flowing, or the lights would go out." On more than one occasion customers would be left eating in the dark until Adel could rush to the back room and plug another coin into the meter.

## Chickens, Chickens, Chickens

Running the Chicken Inn meant procuring large quantities of chickens at a time. Among the local farmers supplying the restaurant was Ron Moses, who recalls that Scotty would regularly drive out to pick up a crate at a time. Another source proved rather interesting. The family discovered that if Mac went to pick up the chickens, he had to gather them himself, but if Ada went, the farmer would gather them for her. From then on, the task of chicken pick-up from this source was delegated to Ada. A woman in Boone was located who would kill and dress chickens at 10 cents apiece. The chickens were then kept and used as needed.



1956 – inside Scotty's

The Throckmorton family usually ran the restaurant themselves unless business was particularly brisk. Hours were from noon to 10:00 p.m., Tuesday through Sunday. On particularly busy weekends, Kay and Art Riley, long-time friends of the family, might be called in to help. Kay stresses that Mac was always a very kind man. In recalling her working days (at 75¢ an hour), Kay notes that mutton was sometimes served during the war years when beef was rationed. To make the meat more palatable, considerable quantities of garlic and other seasonings were used. Kay's favorite pies made by Mac were blueberry and cherry.

## End Of An Era

The Throckmortons sold the Chicken Inn in early 1960 to Alice Dykes from Gilbert. A string of successive enterprises ensued at 3417 Lincoln Way, including Green Man Inn, Scotty's Hamburgers, Kelly's Delly, El Fredo Pizza, Tryon Real Estate, Temptations by Joyce, T.A. Juana's Mexican Restaurant, then three Chinese restaurants, Wok In, Peking Palace and the current May House. Although patrons of the latter may be totally unaware of the history at this site, customers from an earlier era still fondly remember the original Scotty's.

Mac suffered from poison gas endured during World War I and eventually succumbed to cancer in 1964 at age 69. Ada passed away in 1974 at age 78.

Richard was born in Central City, Nebraska in 1921 and lived in a number of different towns in that state and Iowa. He mobilized with the Iowa National Guard at Red Oak in 1940 and served in the famous 34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. After commando training, he was among the troops that went ashore at Algiers in North Africa. He was captured by Rommel in Tunisia in 1943 and held in various German prison camps for two and a half years, forced on the 500-mile "Black Bread March" across

Germany and finally liberated in 1945. Following the war, he finished his college training at Iowa State University. Richard enjoyed a career with Goodyear, Firestone, IDS Investments and Peerless Chain Company before passing away on January 24, 2007.

## Adel's Legacy

Adel Marquette Throckmorton lived life to the fullest. Born May 1, 1930, he attended Ames schools, graduating from Ames High in 1948. He served in the U.S. Air Force, then returned to Ames to help manage the restaurant and obtain a M.S. degree in agricultural education from Iowa State in 1967.



He became a guidance councilor and teacher of driver's education at Yale-Jamaica-Bagley High School in Jamaica, Iowa. After retiring in 1994, he became a rural mail carrier in the Ames area. He was a member of V.F.W., Collegiate United Methodist Church, American Legion, I.O.O.F., Laura Chapter of Eastern Star, Judea White Shrine, Friendship Court Amaranth, Arcadia Lodge 249 A.F. & A.M. and Story County Shriners.

Area residents recall his active participation in the annual Heartland Senior Services Variety Show and the downtown Fourth of July Parade. He was always ready to brighten a friend's day by sharing an appropriate joke or new poem he had written. Adel died suddenly on October 21, 2007 while dining with Collegiate Methodist friends at Hy-Vee West.

Visits with Adel were always energizing, and I was kept busy taking notes on his lifetime of fascinating activities. During a visit on September 4, 2004 about the Odd Fellows Lodge, the topic of a future permanent history center and museum for the Ames Historical Society arose. He inquired about the progress of the site committee, and I responded that a decision had been made and a fund raising campaign would be necessary. To this, Adel responded: "AHS will get its building; I have them in my will!"

Adel died on Oct. 21, 2007, leaving a nearly \$80,000 life insurance policy to benefit the Society's Building Fund. This lasting legacy shows his love for Ames. We salute you, Adel, for your foresight and commitment!

*Based on recollections obtained during conversations with Adel Throckmorton, Aletha Throckmorton, Kay Riley, and Ron Moses.*

## Remembering Adel

*"I knew that Adel was a history buff and the historian of the American Legion. You may remember that he delighted in reciting the Gettysburg Address at each year's Memorial Day Services at the Ames Cemetery. Did you know that his home was all red, white, and blue – paint on the walls, decorations, etc? His wore red, white and blue suspenders, too." Roger Coulson, Ames*

*"I like to remember Adel and the parts he played in the annual Senior Citizens Variety Show sponsored by Heartland Senior Services. He was a regular performer in the shows with the Heartland Songbirds and the Golden K Singers. He did very unique solos that promise to be long remembered by all who saw them – such as dressing up like Annie and "belting out" the song "Tomorrow" or dressing up like Tiny Tim and singing and dancing through "Tiptoe Through the Tulips". Our last show featured him doing a medley of Americana songs while sitting in his wheelchair completely surrounded by American flags.*

*Whatever and wherever he performed, he did it with such "gusto. The audience loved him for it. He always encouraged the other participants in the shows and always was in good spirits. Adel was involved in plays and musicals in high school and studied dance for six years, including ballroom, tap and ballet.*

*He was also seen at most City of Ames functions, especially when they concerned veterans. It did not surprise me that he would think of the Ames Historical Society as part of his legacy.*

*I hope this gives you a good idea of his character and talents and also his love for people, having fun and for his community." Dottie Tschopp McGee, Ames*

*Thanks to Heartland Senior Services for Adel's picture.*

# Ames Historical Society News

## Final Lecture in 2008 Series

Wednesday, April 30, 7pm, City Auditorium

### Celebrating 150 Years of the Cyclone Experience by Tanya Zanish-Belcher

Join Tanya Zanish-Belcher, Head of Special Collections & University Archives at the ISU Library, as she describes her Department's Sesquicentennial projects. From artifacts to oral history interviews, from blogs to websites, from diaries to snapshots, documenting the ISU Sesquicentennial is a full-time effort.

The 150th celebration also demonstrates the ongoing importance of keeping archives.

The 15,000 linear ft. of papers, records, and 1,000,000 images in the Archives were used in numerous university projects and publications. She will also share some of the more unique objects from the collection.

An Iowa State University Sesquicentennial event.  
A \$2 donation is requested at the door.



## Welcome New Board

The Society's Board welcomes four new members (in bold) and thanks its ongoing members for their commitment to the organization's goals.

**2008-2011:** Kathy Svec, **Sharon Wirth, Bob Bourne, Mary Atherly, Matt Donovan**

**2007- 2010:** Dennis Wendell, Ken Cameron, Nick Howell, Carol Phillips

**2006-2009:** Peggy Baer, Joanne Goldman, Neal Tarman, Roger Coulson

Rotating off the Board are Dottie Tschopp McGee and Amy Swenson. We extend our most grateful thanks for their years of service and good work for local history!

## Gift of Technology



We sincerely thank Dan Konrad, Ames, for donating an HP Color LaserJet 4500 printer with duplexing capability - a big step up in our in-house printing abilities! Dan also volunteers by doing research for us.

## Sans Souci Club

By Dennis Wendell, Society Collections Curator

After 90 years of activity, the Sans Souci Club ("Without a Care") of Ames disbanded on Feb. 19, 2008 and donated its records to Ames Historical Society. To mark the occasion, long-time member, Thelma Miller, hosted the group with an elegant tea at her home and invited AHS staff. Alan Spohnheimer, Sara Vouthilak and I were treated to a memorable afternoon. The dining room table was set with ruby-top glasses and sherbets on a tatted and crocheted red tablecloth. Homemade raspberry sherbet, kringla and cookies were served with tea poured from a gilded pot.

The ambiance was only part of the event. The ladies (each about as old as the club itself) went around the table recalling when they came to Ames and had joined the group. The oldest had been a member for 77 years. Equally fun was learning of the club's traditions: monthly meetings in the homes of members, an upper limit of 15, dues never more than 50¢ a year, the rule of "No gossip!" and roll call. At attendance taking, each member shared a story, book review or interesting article. One member told about her experiences in Margaret Hall as an Iowa state College coed. Ruth Brown, a former teacher, came prepared and recited an excerpt from the poem, *Ulysses*, by Alfred Lord Tennyson. Sara recorded the video and audio of Ruth's impressive delivery.

The time soon came for the hand-over of a trunk containing club records dating back to 1917. A posed photo in front of Thelma's fireplace captured the occasion for posterity. AHS staff was honored to be included in this event, which was capped by the transfer of all remaining funds in the club's treasury!

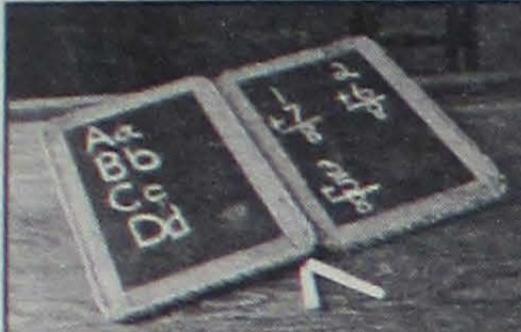


Back (left to right): Thelma Miller, Helen Eggleton, Anita Nichols, Alice Murray, Dorothy Budolfson, Nana DeYoung. Front (left to right): Ruth Brown, Jean Zmolek, Dennis Wendell. Not present: Miriam Dickson, Julia Carlander

# Ames Historical Society News

## Hoggatt School Opening May 31

**Pop Quiz:** Did you know that Hoggatt School has a new bench designed by Rollie Struss with the help of Roger Coulson? (Check it out and see if you can tell which bench is the new one!) Did you know that these two also created slates replicating the original ones to allow each school child to use a slate and slate pencil when visiting Hoggatt?



Hoggatt School summer hours will start on May 31, Saturdays and Sundays, 2 - 4:30 pm. Weekend volunteers are currently being sought. Training is available and there is a handbook outlining policies, study cards with significant information, and a variety of Civil War era artifacts to aid in hosting visitors to the school.

To volunteer and arrange for training, please contact Carol Alexander Phillips, 515-232-0595.

## Country School Conference

### October 10-11, 2008

The Ames Historical Society will be hosting the two-day statewide country school conference October 10-11, 2008 at the Story County Conservation Commission Office Complex north of Ames. A wide variety of local, state, and national speakers will present information and tours will be taken to visit area historical country schools. For more information, contact Carole Jensen, Carol Phillips, or Roger Coulson.

## Ames Foundation Records

The Ames Foundation Board donated its archival records to Ames Historical Society on Feb. 14, 2008. Present were Neala Benson, foundation president; Dennis Wendell, society collections curator; and members of the Ames Foundation Archives Committee consisting of Karsten Smedal, chair and board member; Jane Baty, board secretary; Ellen Landon, board public relations chair; and Virginia Stafford, charter board member.



Pictured left to right are: Wendell, Landon, Stafford, Benson, Baty, and Smedal.



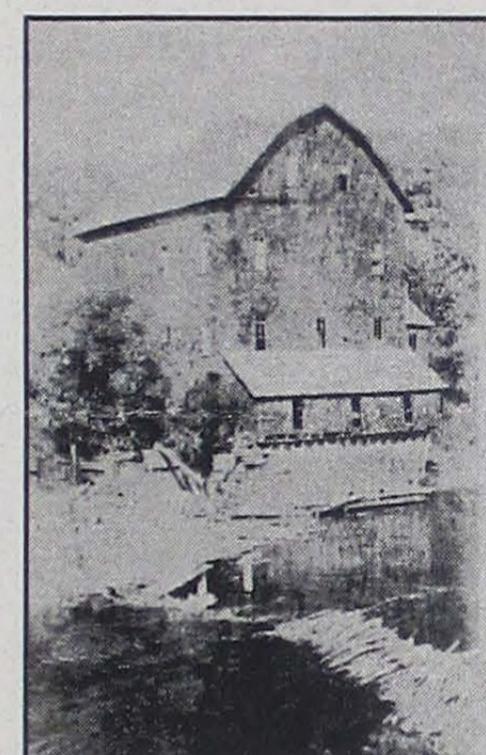
## Mill Auger Now on View at Museum

Scott Sorem, Ames, stopped in to give The Society the Hannum Mill wood auger shaft that he and Jim Graham found a few years ago. It is on display in a glass case at 416 Douglas. Scott and Jim's great find was featured in a story in the 2007 Fall newsletter. That newsletter set off "The Great Mill Debate"!

## The Great Mill Debate

by Alan Spohnheimer

The Fall 2007 newsletter excited all the locals interested in mills so much that a number of them came in to the museum to discuss the photo from the album of early Ames historian, Gladys Meads (left). Gladys had labeled the 1870 picture "Soper's Mill." The roofline was different from other images of Soper's and the common rationalization for this was that the mill had been rebuilt sometime in its career. Dale Hughes is one



of those people who can discern the orientation of buildings by their shadows, so he wondered if the photo had been published reversed, because he just couldn't accept the shadows to indicate Soper's Mill. We had supplied him with several photos for his recently published history of Milford Township, "Milford Township and Proud of It" and he published the Meads photo both ways to make his case. After the book went to print, however, he could see in our highly detailed version of the computerized image that the river was running the wrong direction if the photo was reversed.

Dale had also published another old photo of Soper's Mill with its distinctive roofline in the era after its relocation away from the river (below). That photo "proved" that the easily-recognized roofline had been intact until the mill was out of service. So that presented even more of a dilemma of what to do with the Meads photo. Scott Sorem wondered if the



Meads photo was really a photo of Hannum Mill. That was an exciting thought, as finding a photographic image of Hannum's would be one of our "Holy Grails." We all compared the Meads photo with the Andreas Atlas lithograph, and, considering the Andreas version wasn't really a photo, thought his idea had some merit. The foliage seemed to match what is there today.



Dale traveled to Iowa City to look through many mill photos at the State Historical Society, and was surprised to find a match for the Meads photo. The match was a postcard view of the Stanley Mill at Albion, Iowa. It took him several days to get over the exhilaration of the discovery! He called me at home late that night because he couldn't wait until morning, and the next day came in with a copy of the Albion photo (above).

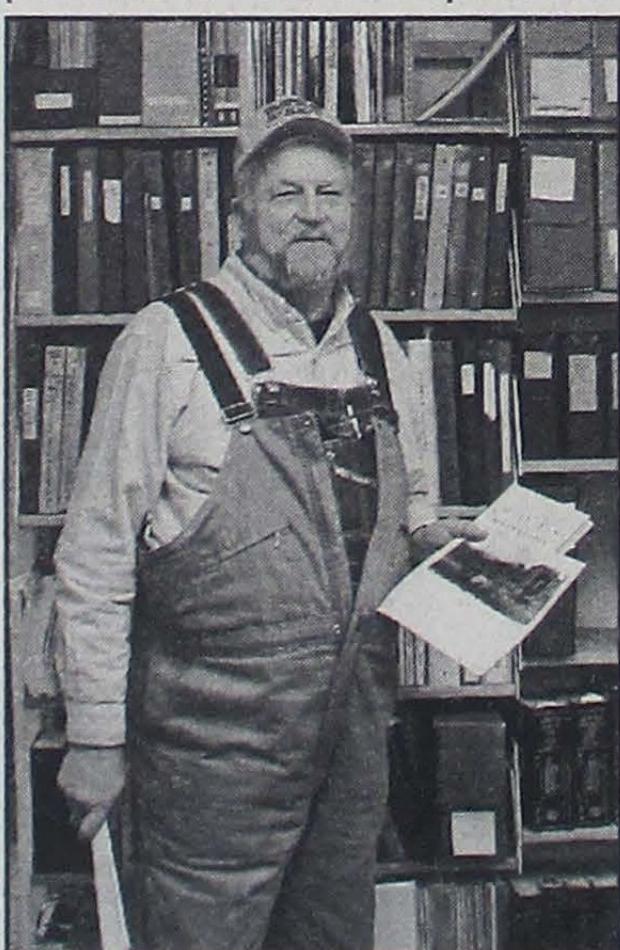
I asked Dale if mills were built according to several set patterns, which would make a number of mills look similar. He replied that in the photos he searched through in Iowa City, each was distinctive. He said he checked rooflines, counted windows, then counted boards, looked at foliage, and on every point, the Meads photo matched the Stanley Mill on the Iowa River at Albion (Marshall County).

I have to salute our "mill guys" for their questions and persistence. Scott was pleased that we at AHS would

listen to or accept a different theory for the Meads photo. He was expecting us to stubbornly hold the line!

It's exciting when new discoveries are made, but I wish the photo were really Hannum's Mill!

Here's Dale holding the Albion photo and the Gladys Meads book.



## You Send Us Mail!

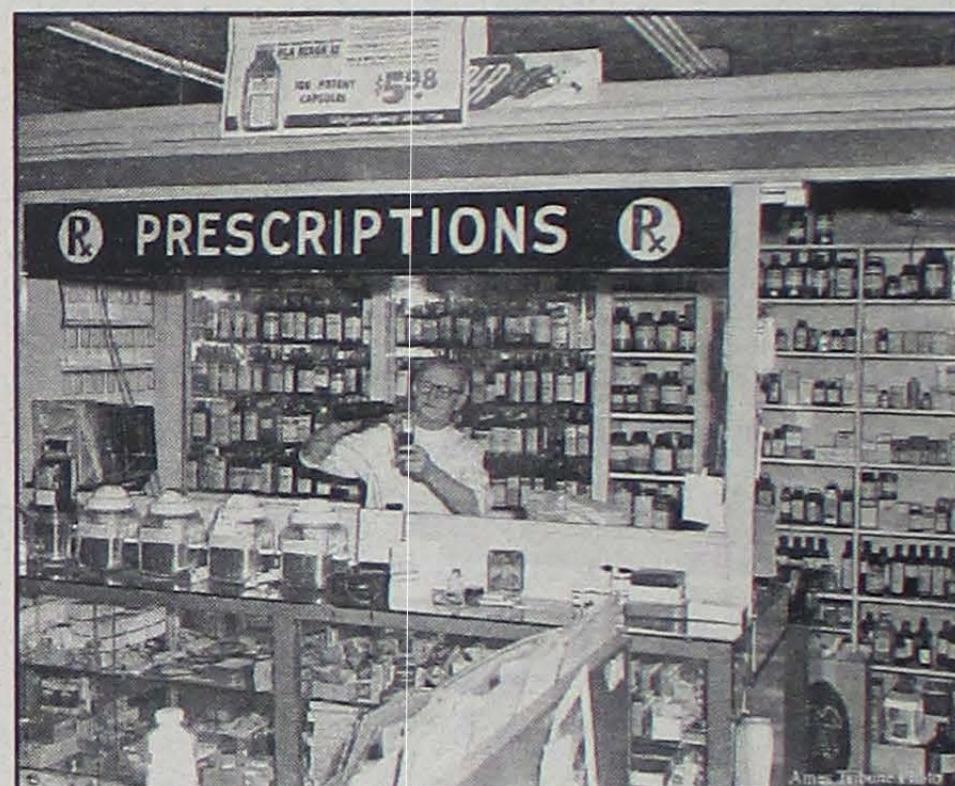
### Made My Day!

**From:** Alenia Lohnes (Oslund)

**Sent:** Saturday, March 8, 2008

**Subject:** Thank you!

[The picture in the paper] made my day! My grandfather was Art [Oslund]. Oh my, what a wonderful childhood that was! My uncle has many of these photos, but not the numbers you have. How did you ever find them? Was that part of the Tribune [photo collection]? I remember those photos so well. Oslund Drug was a foundation to the community for back-to-school supplies when I was a child - long before Target or TG&Y. Also, my grandmother lived in the octagonal [house] until she died. They turned it into apartments with the furniture stripping business in the basement.



**From:** Ames Historical Society, Alan Spohnheimer

**To:** Alenia Lohnes (Oslund)

**Sent:** Tue, Mar 11, 2008

Hello Alenia, Thanks for your message. I often learn much more about the photos after we publish them as folks bring us other stories and remembrances. I learned yesterday that Oslund Drug moved from 308 Main Street to a double storefront (I believe 408-410) some time after the time of those photos. Another gentleman came in yesterday to tell me that Art had a furniture refurbishing business in the octagonal house. Those photos on our website that supplement the Oslund Drug photo published in the Tribune were indeed part of the "million negative" Tribune Archive which we are currently "mining". Has anyone in your family written a family history? We would welcome even a few paragraphs about Art, or the store, or life in the octagon house. We are collecting photos of the octagonal house - we have about 6, and none of the interior.

## Curator's Report by Dennis Wendell

### Donations to the Collections

Here are a few highlights from this quarter:

- **Ames Advertiser**

As part of the ongoing agreement with the Ames Tribune, 1961-2002 back issues of the Ames Advertiser were transferred recently. They include great ads.

- **Washington Township Independent School District records**

Following an earlier donation of records, John Packer added ones from 1879-1885, and 1950-1952. They include checks to teachers, pay orders, ballots, contracts, correspondence and reports and original 1923 Clearview School architectural drawings.

- **Dinkey-related items**

After attending the January 30 lecture on the Dinkey, local artist, Stewart Buck, donated his engaging print of the Dinkey steam locomotive at the motor depot. Also



shown are Morrill Hall, Marston Hall and the Marston water tower. Our print is number 301 of 500 of the 1984 pencil drawing. Faithful volunteer, Paul Clark, donated a glass Christmas ornament with an etched image of the Dinkey. This was originally available as a collector's souvenir in 1995.

- **Native American artifacts**

Prompted by our Feb. 27 lecture by Greg Vitale on the Skunk River, local collector, Art Barton, donated a case full of projectile points, scrapers, debitage and pottery shards, dating possibly from the Woodland period (500 B.C.-500 A.D.). Also included were two mineralized buffalo skulls. All items were found in the Skunk River.

- **Caldwell Electromyograph**

This analytical medical instrument was used in the first Ames clinic to combine medical, chiropractic and osteopathic physicians. We are pleased that Dr. L. Z. Lindemann recognized the significance of this item and initiated its donation for our future museum.



As a special way of honoring Adel Throckmorton at the fellowship gathering after the funeral service, the family invited friends to select items from Adel's extensive collection of clown figures. Thus, Ames Historical Society has come to have these three mementos of his life in our collections.

### Artwork Conserved

The Midwest Art Conservation Center (MACC) in Minneapolis has recently completed conservation of two works of art from our collections. The first work is an early oil painting by beloved local artist, Velma Wallace Rayness, done in 1919. The restoration was funded by the curator.

The second work is a political cartoon drawn by Ding Darling dealing with government aid to mid-western farmers. It was published in the April 24, 1926 issue of the Des Moines Register. The conservation of this piece was funded by the Questers of Iowa and all Ames Questers chapters (Cynthia O. Duff #51, Oakes Ames #283, Margaret Stanton #310, Dane 207 #460, Captain Greeley #871, Neta Snook #882, Old Oaken Bucket #1116, Onondaga #1200). A reception is being planned for the unveiling of this work.



On March 29, Veishea Service Day, five members of ISU's FarmHouse Fraternity helped move building plans from US Bank in Campus-town to 108 5<sup>th</sup> making the plans much more accessible on short notice. Jim Menzel supplied his van and a closed trailer for the move. From left: Kyle Metz, Ben Schmidt, Andrew Steinmetz, Innocent Ndayinzeye, and Luke Lowry.



## Society Building Fund Update

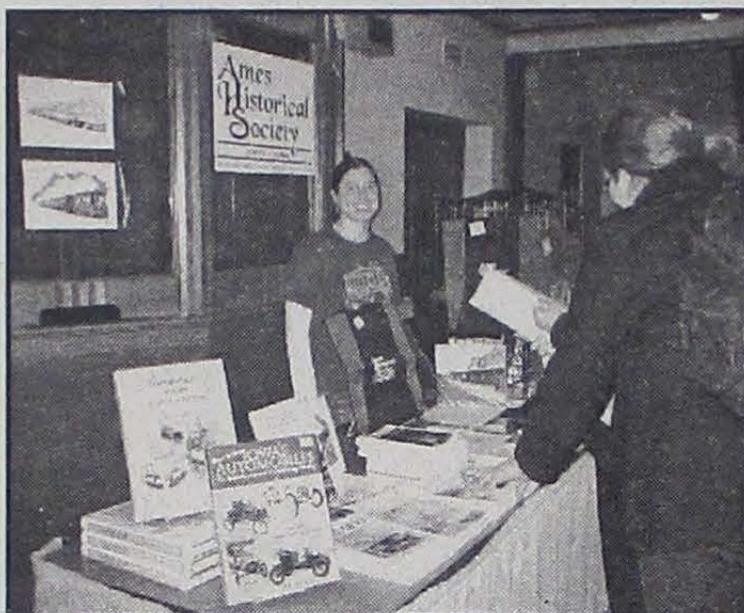
January 2008 \$88,010      March 2008 \$233,700

## Society Operations Endowment

January 2008 \$16,765      March 2008 \$18,600

## Building Fund Grows!

In January, Ames residents and long-time Society volunteers, Rollie and Willie Struss, agreed to co-chair the drive to purchase the building the Society is currently renting at 416 Douglas. As members can see above, the early stages of their committee's work have yielded results! Members that attended the March 10 Annual Meeting learned more about the drive; watch for more news about this exciting campaign!



## Renew Now for 2008

**Membership renewals** for 2008 are due on the one-year anniversary of last year's payment. See the label on this newsletter for information about your membership.

|                         |      |            |         |
|-------------------------|------|------------|---------|
| Introductory - 1st year | \$10 | Sustaining | \$100   |
| Individual              | \$25 | Benefactor | \$500   |
| Family                  | \$40 | Patron     | \$1,000 |
| Friend                  | \$50 |            |         |

### Additional amount for:

Building Fund \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Operations Endowment \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Checks payable to Ames Historical Society; send to:  
**Ames Historical Society, PO Box 821, Ames, IA 50010**

The Society's collections assistant, Sara Vouthilak, (left) has set up an enticing Gift Shop at each of our lectures at City Auditorium. Patrons have been pleased to find Ames history materials, as well as publications by the speakers. (Also available at 416 Douglas)